

REMARKS

The Amendments

Claim 6 is amended to incorporate the substance of claim 13 therein. Claims 14 and 15 are rewritten in independent form. These amendments are made to direct the claims to the indicated allowable subject matter. New dependent claims are added to the newly independent claims 14 and 15. The new dependent claims have the same recitation as the previous dependent claims from claim 6.

It is submitted that the above amendments would put the application in condition for allowance since they direct the claims to the indicated allowable subject matter. The amendments do not raise new issues or present new matter. Additional claims are added without the cancellation of an equal number of claims but they merely recite the same language as previous claims and were necessitated by putting two additional claims in independent form. The amendments have been made to direct the claims to the subject matter indicated allowable in the last Office Action, thus, they were not earlier presented. Accordingly, it is submitted that the requested amendments should be entered. Additionally, as stated below, it appears the last Office Action was not a Final action, anyway, thus, there would be no restriction on amending the claims.

To the extent that the amendments avoid the prior art or for other reasons related to patentability, competitors are warned that the amendments are not intended to and do not limit the scope of equivalents which may be asserted on subject matter outside the literal scope of any patented claims but not anticipated or rendered obvious by the prior art or otherwise unpatentable to applicants. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more continuing and/or divisional applications directed to any subject matter disclosed in the application which has been canceled by any of the above amendments.

The Status of the Office Action

The cover page of the action indicates it is Final, but the text of the action makes no such indication. Also, the text of the action gives no basis for making the action Final in view of the new rejections made therein. Applicants, thus, assume that the action was non-final. Applicants request that the next Office Action clarify that the previous one was non-final. Although, it would appear this question will be rendered moot by the allowance of the application.

The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

The several rejections of claims 6, 8-12 and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103 are believed to be rendered moot by the above amendments. The claims have been amended so that claim 6 incorporates the subject matter of claim 13 and claims 14 and 15 are written in independent form. The Office Action indicates that claims 13-15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and the above amendments provide this result.

It is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. But the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned to discuss any unresolved matters.

Respectfully submitted,



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